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Director

County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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November 7, 2006

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich
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From: Patricia S. Ploehn, LCSW
Director

DECEMBER 6, 2005 BOARD AGENDA ITEM #16 RE: MISSING CHILDREN MONTHLY UPDATE

On December 6, 2005, your Board directed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to reconvene the Missing Children Task Force in order to continue in the identification and refinement of practices for the prevention and recovery of runaways; and to report back on a monthly basis with status updates on the following:

- I. Existing Countywide and community-specific services and programs, including the support that the DCFS Emergency Response Command Post can provide;
- II. Improved maintenance of the DCFS Missing Children Website;
- III. Enhancement of the DCFS Child Protection Hotline to provide specialized support for runaways;
- IV. Consideration of using the Permanency Partners Program (P-3), and;
- V. Addressing the issues that have been raised by youth who have been or are in care of the Department through corrections and modifications to the Department's policy.

UPDATES

The last Runaway Task Force was convened on October 19, 2006. The meeting included group discussion on ways the Department could further champion the needs of the Runaway population via individual offices. The concept would encompass much of what has been discussed since the reconvening of the Task Force – that of keeping the Runaway population, its concerns and challenges, visible to office and overall departmental operations. Additional discussion included potential follow-up steps later in dealing with sub-categories within the Runaway population and are further delineated in this report.

CURRENT STATUS

I. Existing County-wide and community-specific services and programs, including the support that the DCFS Emergency Response Command Post can provide:

The Department's Emergency Response Command Post maintains its procedures by which to monitor the runaway youth. The division also continues to document specific information on that population for use in regionally based Team Decision-Making (TDM) conferences. A follow-up report will be made to your Board upon any changes regarding this practice.

II. Improved maintenance of the DCFS Missing Children Web site:

The Department has completed the "Train the Trainer" exercise to ensure there is an expert within each Service Bureau readily available to dispense expert advice on challenges and issues relating to Runaways. These 'experts' remain available for detail and assistance ranging from challenges concerning data entry to policy questions.

III. Enhancement of the DCFS Child Protection Hotline to provide specialized support for runaways:

The Law Enforcement sub-committee has been dedicating effort to interfacing with various law enforcement agencies for expedited processing of Runaway Youth. The sub-committee reports that several law enforcement agencies are actively revamping policies and procedures, which are more in alignment with the Department's protocols.

IV. Consideration of using the Permanency Partners Program (P-3):

As outlined in the March 1, 2006 Board report, all runaways are now referred to P-3 staff. A follow-up report will be made to your Board upon any changes regarding this initiative.

V. Addressing the issues that have been raised by youth who have been or are in care of the Department through corrections and modifications to the Department's policy.

The Youth Sub-committee reported on the Department's efforts via its Emancipation section. There have been "Youth Development" classes added to the roster of ILP resources for all youth. Also, in line with youth feedback, the section has added additional free therapy service resources. Youth may access information on classes and mental health resources via the ILP Internet web site. Additionally, as a response to youth feedback, the Department has also created an updated resource directory that outlines over 90 resources, ranging from hotlines, medical services, emergency food shelters, counseling, legal services and parenting education.

The Department's Out-of-Home Care and Policy sections are currently reviewing the resource directory to sanction distribution internally and for use by external stakeholders.

CONCLUSION

The October 19th Task Force meeting also yielded a great deal of discussion on potential follow up steps to be taken now that data entry is stable and the Runaway population is more comprehensively understood. Topics discussed included the following: Termination of jurisdiction for those youth over 18 who have made appropriate, documented living arrangements; examining ASFA exemptions for waiver latitude; and, continuing to examine the Department's ability to procure individualized resources for sub-populations of Runaway Youth. Follow up discussion will take place on the above-mentioned topics at the next Runaway Task Force meeting scheduled for December 14, 2006.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact me, or your staff may contact Armand Montiel, Board Relations Manager at (213) 351-5530.

PSP:AS:cm

Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

Abducted & Runaway Foster Childrens System (ARKS)
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON RUNAWAY CHILDREN SERVICED BY DCFS

November 6, 2006

Category	Totals / Subtotal	Percent	Comments
Runaway DCFS Foster Children as reported in ARKS System	412		
Age			
0-9 years old	0	0%	
10-13 years old	13	3%	
14-17 years old	399	97%	Majority are teenagers 14-17
	412		
Gender			
Female	291	71%	More girls than boys runaway
Male	121	29%	
	412		
Ethnicity			
American Indian	3	1%	
Black	119	29%	
Asian/Pacific Islander	10	2%	
Hispanic/Latino	226	55%	
White	54	13%	
	412		
Placement Type			
Foster Home	182	44%	
Group Home	145	35%	
Relative/Guardian Home	77	19%	
(Not Indicated)	8	2%	
	412		
Location of CSW			
SPA 1 Lancaster	12	3%	
SPA 1 Palmdale	21	5%	
SPA 2 North Hollywood	25	6%	
SPA 2 Santa Clarita	22	5%	
SPA 3 El Monte	1	0%	
SPA 3 Glendora	32	8%	
SPA 3 Pasadena	14	3%	
SPA 3 Pomona	16	4%	
SPA 4 Metro North	44	11%	
SPA 5 West Los Angeles	17	4%	
SPA 6 Century	20	7%	
SPA 6 Compton	18	4%	
SPA 6 Hawthorne	8	2%	
SPA 6 Wateridge	33	8%	
SPA 7 Belvedere	32	8%	
SPA 7 Santa Fe Springs	32	8%	
SPA 8 Lakewood	29	7%	
SPA 8 Torrance	19	5%	
Adoptions	4	1%	
Specialized Programs	13	3%	
(Not Indicated)	0	0%	
	412		